Issue briefs are a common policy-writing genre, particularly in the advocacy field. For our purposes, we will define an issue brief as a 1–2 page document used to quickly inform policy makers about the basics of an issue or a program. Ideally, they provide basic information on an issue in a nonpartisan fashion so that policy makers can quickly come up to speed on issues about which they know little. You may also hear the term issue brief applied to longer documents (4–6 pages), but anything longer probably shouldn’t be described as “brief.”

Issue briefs are used by advocates at every level of government who are trying to raise the profile of an issue to policy makers. In legislative bodies throughout the country, advocates for causes as diverse as children’s rights, chemical manufacturing, and government agencies tour legislative offices with these two-sided, sharply designed briefs in hand. Each advocate is hoping that their brief will help educate legislators and aides about the importance of their issue. After all, if legislators don’t know why they should care about the issue and the basic facts about it, how can they begin to make policy about it?

Problematically for advocates, perhaps no other setting in policy making is as busy as a legislative session. To educate in this context, even some of the standard rules previously covered in this book are up for grabs: Figures and tables can be included without being described in the text, bibliographies can be consigned to a URL, photographs and quotes can be included as evidence. Scandalous? Perhaps in other genres. But in issue briefs, if it is honest and effective, then it is fair game.

1 You may also hear the term policy brief used interchangeably with issue brief. There is no firm rule that distinguishes between the two. In contrast to an objectively focused issue brief, policy briefs often take a stand and advocate for it (Martin, 2014). Sometimes policy brief is used as an umbrella term for both advocacy and objective briefs (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2011). In this chapter, we will stick with objective policy briefs, but you can use almost all of the same rules and the formatting tools to write an advocacy brief when the need arises.

2 As well as being hand-delivered by the advocates themselves, issue briefs are typically posted on organizations’ websites, distributed to members, and mailed to relevant decision makers.
Distinctive Aspects of Issue Briefs

The audience for an issue brief is distinctive because they are insanely busy at any given moment and they are being given a document they did not request. Instead, the issue brief is a part of a sales pitch about the issue. Given these constraints, the metric by which your issue brief should be judged is whether or not a reader with no basic knowledge of the issue is able to look at the brief and understand its purpose and the basic facts of the issue in 30 seconds (Ruderman, 2012). That’s the first test: to guarantee that the audience can take in the basics and then decide if they want to learn more. Let’s look at some of the aspects of how issue briefs accomplish this task given their constraints.

Narrowly Focused on Communicating One Important Message

The short time your audience will spend with your issue brief means it should be fairly narrowly focused. An issue brief should focus squarely on one particular problem or program. Once you have decided what you want your reader to understand, then you can begin deciding what to include and at what level of detail.

Remember that there is a direct trade-off between focus on the particulars and establishing the context. Rather than making a sweeping overview of child poverty—its history, its causes, its variation across time and place—focus on the program the audience needs to know about in order to make a dent in the problem.

Very Brief

Issue briefs are often distributed at the start of a meeting with a legislator and entered into a large pile of papers on a decision maker’s desk to be picked up later, so length matters. The shorter it is, the more likely it is to be read. Issue briefs in this context are almost always 1–2 pages long.3

Once you have selected an issue, then you must create a document that enables policy makers to go from knowing very little about the topic to understanding the relevant background, current trends, etc., in 1–2 pages. This is

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3 In some contexts, you will see the term issue brief used to describe a report that is 6–8 pages long. These briefs are usually produced by think tanks and written for someone who is already interested in the issue and wants more detail than a 1–2 page paper. The briefs look more like minireports than the issue briefs discussed in this chapter. They may still use some of the tools of a 1–2 page issue brief but are usually more formal. But even in this setting, an issue brief is short—no longer than 8 pages—as anything longer should really be referred to as a report, not a brief.
challenging, but it can also be a helpful exercise for you as a writer. Since you can't include everything you know about the problem, you have to be audience centered and write about what they need to know about the problem.

**No Specific Audience**

The advocates working the halls of a legislature use the same brief for Republicans and Democrats, rookie legislators and long-serving committee chairs. As such, issue briefs are rarely addressed to a particular person. Instead, they are designed to educate a general audience about the topic. To bring a wide variety of people up to speed on the issue, they need to be written using general language and broadly stated enough to educate newcomers to the topic while providing facts that will interest old hands.

**Focus on Communicating the Facts**

In contrast to many other policy-writing genres, in an issue brief you do not need to explain every statistic you include and how you arrived at it. Issue briefs should focus on a central message and use facts that support that message. You should understand all of the context, methods, and nuances of the data in case you are lucky enough to have your audience ask about them, but you should not put these elements in your issue brief. Write simply and directly about the facts. Those are enough here.

**Heavy Use of Visual Aids**

Issue briefs are the most visually engaging of all of the policy genres. Your reader will likely spend very little time with your document, so you should use all of the visual aids at your disposal to effectively grab their attention. You should think about using figures, tables, and bulleted lists, which communicate large amounts of information quickly. And, in an unusual twist, you do not need to write about the figures and tables in your main text. In an issue brief, they can stand alone, so make sure to employ the best practices from Chapters 5 and 6 to make sure they can do so successfully.

In addition to figures, you have other tools at your disposal to grab the attention of your audience. You can include callout boxes (see examples below) to highlight important points. You can include pictures or maps that help your audience connect with the issue. Whatever visual aids you use, you should always take a step back to make sure the overall visual design draws them immediately to the key points.4

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4 If you have the resources, a graphic designer can help you think about how the layout of the issue brief focuses a reader's eye and how to take advantage of the natural way we look at pieces of paper.
One simple way to enhance the design of your issue brief is to use the rule of thirds. If you have taken photography classes you know how to use the rule of thirds to compose a photograph that is visually pleasing (if not, search the web for an example or two). The same rules apply here. Envision dividing the page into nine boxes by drawing a tick-tack-toe board across your issue brief. Arrange callout boxes, tables, figures, and headers so they fit neatly within one or more of these boxes and your issue brief will look sharper.

Neutral Tone

Finally, issue briefs should be written in a neutral tone. This is because at their heart, issue briefs are about conveying a set of facts, and the facts are nonpartisan (despite recent reports to the contrary!). For example, industry groups and environmental groups should basically agree with the facts contained within each other's issue briefs. Their issue briefs may have a different focus or a different take on the issue, but even if they vehemently disagree on how the issues themselves should be addressed, the facts should be the same.

Example Issue Briefs

Generally speaking, issue briefs include an overview of the issue, identify and discuss prominent stakeholders, and discuss current policy and commonly suggested solutions to the problem. The exact format of any issue brief depends on the issue itself and what must be conveyed in order to meet the objectives.

As a result, no two issue briefs are alike, and it is difficult to know whether or not a brief will be successful without knowing the context in which it is written. This lack of a firm format can feel paralyzing or freeing, depending on your temperament. But before you make a decision about which camp you fall in, let’s take a look at a couple of examples so you can get a sense of the genre.

Issue Brief Example 1: Voluntary Home Visiting in California (an Excellent Example)

The first issue brief comes from Children Now, an interest group in California that is “pro-kid” (Rothermel, n.d.). It lobbies the California legislature on a wide variety of pro-kid issues ranging from foster care to early childhood education to children’s health. The following brief, “Voluntary
Home Visiting in California,” was a part of its campaign in 20XX to educate legislators on the value of home visits so that legislators would consider expanding funding for the programs.

Take a minute or two to look over the example and my annotations on the side.

Now that you’re back, were you able to understand the main point in less than 30 seconds? Were you able to understand the issue cleanly and clearly after a single read through?

Let’s talk a bit about what this issue brief does to enable it to succeed as well as it does. The first thing you probably noticed is how sharp it looks. It’s visually inviting to your eye and you intuitively are drawn to it. How did the author accomplish this?

First, notice that both pages clearly employ the rule of thirds. The header on the first page occupies the top third and the callout box fits neatly in the right-hand third. On the second page, the table takes up the top two-thirds and the recommendations take up the final third.

Second, notice how the author altered the font to draw your attention to different elements. The large numbers in the callout box draw your attention to the magnitude of the problem. The limited bolding (just two phrases) cues you into the key terms that are helpful in understanding the issue.

Finally, notice how focused the issue brief is. The text in the header and the first body paragraph work together to provide a clear and clean introduction to home visiting and why it is important. The remainder of the content fills in the details. So while this issue brief looks flashy, with lots of visual bells and whistles, the solid, focused content is also crucial to making it effective. The author did a lot of clear-headed thinking as she considered and executed the design elements.

Now think a bit about what didn’t work for you. What could be done better? For starters, there is no date on this issue brief, so it’s hard to know if it was written in 2008 or 2018. Second, there are a couple of small omissions that would have improved it. The table on page 2 would have benefited from a title, as well as from a URL that could have provided the sources.

In addition to the design choices, there are lots of editorial choices about the content in this issue brief. The author featured a white or Hispanic baby in the photo instead of an Asian or black baby. Most of the language is about helping families, but while moms are mentioned on several occasions, dads never are. These choices aren’t wrong, per se; in fact, they probably helped make the issue brief more effective. But it is still worth noting that they are choices. Hopefully, the author actively considered them and their trade-offs while designing this issue brief.
Figure 8.1 A Strong Start for Families: Voluntary Home Visiting in California

Title immediately tells you what you are about to read.

Picture provides visual space and the cute kid is memorable!

Clearly explains the problem.

Clearly explains how the program addresses the problem.

Bulleted list is bracketed by two bolded terms that emphasize key aspects of the program.

Footnote provides context for the reader by identifying the organization.

Unusual choice in an issue brief but it works here because the author clearly switches from providing facts above to offering opinions below.

Table clearly gives an overview of relevant programs and their reach.

Table would benefit from a title to tell you what to expect when you read it.

Issue Brief Example 2: Connecting CalWORKs With Home Visiting (an Issue Brief That Could Be Improved)

Now let’s look at another issue brief, again on the topic of home visiting in California (Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division, 2017). Take a minute or two to look it over and then flip back to this page.

Now that you’re back, were you able to understand the main point in less than 30 seconds? Were you able to understand the issue cleanly and clearly after a single read through?

If you’re like me, you found this issue brief much harder to understand, even though you actually knew more about home visiting when you started to read this issue brief than you did the first one. Why? This issue brief has many of the same components as the previous brief, and even some that the previous one didn’t (a date, for example). The headings draw your attention well and the bolding is appropriate. What happened?

There are some easy and obvious ways to criticize this issue brief. The header is overly crowded and confusing (what is “Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health”?). There is lots of wasted space on the first page. The font choice makes it hard to read. When you flip to page 2, you don’t know where you should look first, and there’s a spot that naturally draws your eye.

But really, all of these are minor details compared to the main problem: The thinking fell down here. The author lays out a clear purpose for the issue brief in the title, “Connecting CalWORKs with Home Visiting,” and then fails to do just that. Instead, the issue brief provides a lot of facts, all of which are presumably correct. But the issue brief doesn’t do a consistent job of making the case for how CalWORKs and home visiting are connected. It needs to provide a story that connects those facts to the overall purpose. Without the story, the brief comes across as a list of loosely connected facts. That is why this issue brief is so much harder to understand.

The lesson? Writing is both communicating and thinking, even in an issue brief. Make sure you don’t forget the thinking!

Example 3: Economic Well-Being of Rhode Island Families: The Promise and Practice of Two-Generation Approaches (a Longer, Plainer Issue Brief That Is Well Written)

The previous two examples might feel overwhelming because of the extensive graphic design elements involved, but you can create an excellent

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5 There are two kinds of fonts: serif and sans serif. Serif fonts, like this one, have small strokes at the ends of the letters. Sans serif fonts, like the one in this sentence, do not. The small strokes in serif fonts make them easier to read, and I suggest using one in your documents.
issue brief simply by using the graphic design elements available in basic word-processing programs. To illustrate, let's look at a final example also focusing on family policy (Cooley, 2015).

This longer brief is longer than the previous two because it was written in a different context. It was distributed at a legislative advocacy event that the author’s organization sponsored. Legislators, legislative aides, and agency personnel had requested a briefing on this topic. Their sustained interest allowed the author to write a longer issue brief and succeed without the flash of the other examples.

Figure 8.2 Connecting CalWORKS With Home Visiting

This issue brief is actually written by the Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Division. Leaving this out means that readers may not know who wrote this.

The heading is helpful but the text doesn’t answer basic questions like “What is home visiting?” or “Why does it help make CalWORKs more effective?”

The side bar and the picture take up a lot of space on this first page. It might have been more effective to make the rest of the page less dense, either in the header section or in the main text itself.

Source: California Department of Public Health, https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DMCAH/Pages/default.aspx.

(Continued)
This box works. The helpful title is bolded and in larger font to make sure you read it first. The title is informative and sets you up to learn what is inside.

A title for this box would help clarify what purpose it serves, both to the writer and to the audience. As it stands, it is confusing. Why are these four sections in one box? Two of them are about eligibility, one about guidance and one about how to follow up.

Once you have read the boxes, you naturally start reading here. Unfortunately, you have forgotten what the list is about because it spans the front and the back.

Source: California Department of Public Health, https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DMCAH/Pages/default.aspx.

Now take a minute or two to look over the third example and then flip back to this page.

Now that you’re back, were you able to understand the main point in less than 30 seconds? Were you able to understand the issue cleanly and clearly after a single read through?

After reading the last one, this one should feel much easier to comprehend even though it is longer. How did the author accomplish this? She doesn’t do much that is fancy: just one figure and two callout boxes. The two pages employ lists and bolding effectively but nothing out of the ordinary.
So why is this brief successful? The author uses straightforward headings that allow you to easily skim the document and know what is inside it. The headings are clear and naturally follow from the previous one (“What are two-generation approaches?” → “Why use two-generation approaches?” → “Do two-generation approaches work?”).

Nothing fancy, straightforward, solid thinking, well written, and therefore very effective.

RHODE ISLAND FAMILY IMPACT SEMINARS

April 2015

Economic Well-Being of Rhode Island Families: The Promise and Practice of Two-Generation Approaches

**Executive Summary**

Children who grow up in low-income families are likely to suffer adverse long-term consequences and continue the cycle of poverty as adults. Some interventions to promote economic well-being, focused on either the child or the parent, have shown only modest effects in disrupting the pattern. Workplace development programs sometimes ignore parental constraints in participation and some early childhood education (ECE) programs do not consider the family conditions to which a child returns. Two-generation policy approaches promote family economic well-being by explicitly combining intensive, high-quality program components targeted to both adults and their children. Emerging evidence from program evaluations supports the continued consideration of two-generation policy alternatives.

**Economic Well-being of Rhode Island Families**

Families are responsible for several tasks essential to a well-functioning society. Families routinely provide both childcare and economic support, but sometimes they need additional assistance. Rhode Island’s Temporary Caregiver Insurance program, only the third paid family leave program in the country, is a step in the right direction to support working parents and protect jobs in times of medical crisis or at childbirth. Some family economic struggles, however, represent a persistent challenge over time. According to 2013 estimates compiled by RI Kids Count, 22% of children are growing up in households with incomes at or below the federal poverty line. The unemployment rate for parents actively seeking jobs was 9% in that year. Even households with employed parents struggle for economic self-sufficiency. Among families with at least one parent working for at least 1 full year, 18% were still considered low-income. 34% of families with children did not have regular, full-time employment.

**Child Development in Economically Disadvantaged Families**

Research has repeatedly shown that children who grow up in economically disadvantaged homes are more likely to suffer adverse developmental effects than other children. Educational effects include low school readiness, low academic proficiency, and increased risk of not completing high school. Adverse health effects of child poverty include higher rates of asthma, diabetes, acute illnesses, hearing and vision issues, and speech problems. Furthermore, children growing up in poor families are much more likely to face economic disadvantages as adults, thus continuing an intergenerational cycle of poverty. The effects may be particularly acute if poverty occurs during the earliest years of childhood. Policy interventions that directly target children’s developmental needs and promote parental employment simultaneously hold promise for disrupting negative consequences.

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**Source:** Dr. Valerie Cooley and Dr. Kenneth Wong, Co-Directors of the Rhode Island Family Impact Seminars.

(Continued)
The Promise of Two-Generation Anti-poverty Strategies:
Existing and Emerging Evidence
By Dr. Christopher T. King

What Are Two-Generation Approaches?

Two-generation programs seek to improve family economic well-being by explicitly combining interventions targeted at both adults and their children. In contrast, anti-poverty strategies have typically focused on adults or children. For decades, programs have helped adults through education and training or supported children through early interventions. In two-generation approaches, these essential elements of ECE for children and education and workforce development programs for adults are complemented and reinforced by additional components including support services, asset-building, health promotion, and the development of social capital networks through coaching and peer support. A particular two-generation strategy may emphasize a child or adult focus, as illustrated by the Continuum shown below, but the two-generation approach always considers the well-being of the whole family.

Why Use Two-Generation Approaches?

Poverty may affect child development through multiple mechanisms. The chronic stress associated with persistent economic disadvantage may interfere with brain development, affect cognitive functioning and emotional regulation, and increase the likelihood of physical and/or mental health issues. Limited resources and opportunities associated with low incomes, few assets, and limited parental education may also affect child outcomes. Parental employment can positively impact children through provision of role models and higher income for children, but it also decreases parenting time and increases stress, especially for parents with unstable, low-wage jobs without benefits. The variety of poverty-related factors that influence child development suggests the need for a multi-faceted, coordinated strategy focused on the whole family to disrupt pathways leading to negative outcomes.

Programs focusing primarily on either children or adults have not shown strong effects on economic well-being of families. Evaluations of ECE programs have shown mixed results, including the initial two-generation models that added low-intensity parenting components. Recent ECE evaluations highlight the challenges of replicating the positive effects found in a few early studies. Children return home from such programs to families that are likely struggling with limited income, education, and skills. Traditional workforce development programs focused on adults have produced only modest effects on parental income and employment. Intensive, sector-specific career pathway programs have yielded larger and more lasting returns on investment. Parental constraints, however, make it challenging for some low-income individuals to participate. Two-generation approaches to promote family economic well-being adopt a holistic perspective and rely on coordinated services.

Do Two-Generation Programs Work? Emerging Evidence from CareerAdvance® and Other Initiatives

Two-generation approaches have been implemented in several sites and the early results are promising. One example, CareerAdvance®, is a work-readiness and training program piloted in Tulsa, OK that helps low-income parents with young children pursue economic self-sufficiency.

Source: Dr. Valerie Cooley and Dr. Kenneth Wong, Co-Directors of the Rhode Island Family Impact Seminars.

Part 3 | Policy Genres and Their Purposes

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The program equips parents through programs designed to increase employability, earning potential, and parenting skills while also promoting school readiness and socio-emotional development among children. CareerAdvance® utilizes a sector-specific career pathway of sequential trainings leading to specific “stackable” credentials needed within the healthcare sector. Key components include coaching, cohort-based training, peer support networks, and performance incentives. The program is paired with high-quality early education to specifically utilize a two-generation approach. Recent results show that 95% of the initial 102 participants in the CareerAdvance® nursing pathway completed the core course, 93% passed the certification exam for nursing assistants, and 71% obtained employment. Participants indicated that key factors in achieving success were the support of peer networks, coaching about work-family balance issues, and the acquisition of particular skills including time management and communication skills.

The Jeremiah Program and Keys to Degrees represent alternative models of two-generation programs for promoting family economic self-sufficiency. The Jeremiah Program in St. Paul and Minneapolis, MN targets single mothers and provides life skills training, individualized coaching, employment readiness, and job placement services to promote economic self-sufficiency. Recognizing the challenges of single parenthood, the program also provides safe, affordable housing on a campus with other participants and on-site early childhood education. A recent study by the Wilder Foundation showed a $4 return on investment (ROI) to society for every dollar spent on a Jeremiah family.

Keys to Degrees, a program started at Endicott College in Beverly, MA, provides family-friendly housing on college campuses to single custodial parents enrolled full-time as students. Students receive group and individualized support from mentors and peers to pursue a 4-year college degree. The program also offers access to ECE and after-school programming. A recent evaluation of program sites, funded by the Kellogg Foundation and conducted by Program Evaluation and Research Group, found that Keys to Degrees participants rely less on the program over time and are making strides toward degree completion and economic self-sufficiency. Financial sustainability of the program is a concern, though, largely because campus housing is subsidized.

Key Principles in Two-Generation Policy Approaches

Two-generation approaches are also relevant to policy-level reforms and systems interventions. Developing effective and efficient policies relies on careful consideration of the particular context of economic disadvantage that families face. Two-generation approaches can assist families in fulfilling important social functions of child care, child development, and economic support by incorporating a few key principles:

1) Effective coordination is important to address fragmentation in services for low-income families.
2) Expanding social capital networks through career coaches and cohort models is an essential component.
3) A whole family perspective can be incorporated into initial designs for new programs.

Source: Dr. Valerie Cooley and Dr. Kenneth Wong, Co-Directors of the Rhode Island Family Impact Seminars.

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Policy Implications

1) Effective coordination and collaboration is important to address fragmentation in existing services for low-income families. For example, institutions of higher education and human service agencies need to work together more effectively to provide support and flexibility to low-income parents on campuses. At present, 23% of students in higher education are parents, and the figure for community and technical colleges is about twice that figure. Other opportunities exist to coordinate within and across home visiting, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and healthcare expansion programs.

2) Expanding social capital networks through career coaches, cohort models, and peer supports is an essential component of effective programs. These interventions help parents address the challenge of balancing childcare and employment responsibilities. Low-income parents are resilient and have a strong motivation to improve the lives of their children, but some education and training requirements create conflicts with parenting tasks.

3) A whole family perspective can be incorporated into program designs and proposals related to opportunities for federal funding. Two-generation strategies for promoting family economic well-being can be pursued through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, ongoing Food Stamp E&T Demonstrations, and upcoming reauthorizations of TANF, Head Start, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. A window of opportunity exists, but the responsibility for high-quality design and implementation of programs for family economic well-being rests squarely on states and municipalities.

About the Family Impact Seminars

The Rhode Island Family Impact Seminar is affiliated with a national network of university-based sites in over 25 states called The Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars (http://familyimpactseminars.org). In 2014, Brown University was accepted to represent Rhode Island. The Institute provides training and technical assistance to state affiliates. We receive guidance from a legislative advisory council including Senator Louis DiPalma, Senator Gayle Goldin, Representative Deborah Ruggiero, Representative Marvin Abney, and Representative Antonio Gurruso. Legislative staff including Marie Ganain, Lynne Urbani, and Kayleigh Pratt have provided insight and help. Joseph Codega coordinated the 2015 Seminar.

The Rhode Island Family Impact Seminar shares two primary goals espoused by the Policy Institute. One is to strengthen policymaking by providing timely, objective, high-quality research on current issues for state legislators and legislative staff through seminars, discussion sessions, and issue briefs. The Seminar also promotes the adoption of a family impact lens to consider the effects of policy on family functioning and the fulfillment of key social responsibilities including childcare and economic support.

This issue brief was prepared by Dr. Valerie Cooley with Dr. Kenneth Wong, Co-Directors of the Rhode Island Family Impact Seminars. Contact valerie.cooley@brown.edu for further information. The RI Family Impact Seminars are sponsored by the Brown University Taubman Center for Public Policy.

Source: Dr. Valerie Cooley and Dr. Kenneth Wong, Co-Directors of the Rhode Island Family Impact Seminars.
Conclusion

The three examples above will have given you a flavor of the issue brief genre. You’ve seen a stylish and effective issue brief, a stylish and ineffective issue brief, and a plain and effective issue brief. Each one comes from its own context and was used for a specific purpose. Now that you have seen a few examples and know the basic principles of issue briefs, it might be helpful for you to search for other example issue briefs in your area. After looking at a few of them, you’ll have a sense for what works and what doesn’t work in your topic area.

As you begin to write your own issue brief, make sure to keep the thinking front and center by employing your audience-centered writing principles. Always be thinking, Why is it that I am writing this? What does my audience need to know? How can I best use this particular format and its particular rules to communicate with them?

Once you have the thinking down, enjoy communicating in this unique policy genre. It’s not often that public policy writers get to create something that is so visually centered. It’s not quite as artistic as being a photographer, but it can be fun to design something that is both beautiful and effective.

CHECKLIST

Content and Analysis

- Demonstrates thorough understanding of the topic and its implications.
- Includes background, legislative issues, public concerns, and other aspects of the topic.
- Correctly identifies every important issue.
- Virtually all included information is relevant.
- Provides correct amount of information.

Document Formatting and Presentation

- Writes to an intelligent reader unfamiliar with specifics of topic.
- Discussion flows logically.
- Well formatted to enhance clarity by breaking content into sections with clear foci.
Writing

• Short, precise, readable sentences that are actor centered.
• Paragraphs are cohesive, coherent, and properly emphasize important ideas.
• No grammar or spelling errors.
• No jargon.
• Passes Washington Post test.

EXERCISES

1. What is the purpose of your issue brief? Why are you creating it?
2. Who are the various audiences you will be targeting with your issue brief? What do they need to know about your problem?
3. Think about the content of your policy brief. What do you need to include?
4. Sketch the design elements of your policy brief on a piece of paper. What figures, tables, lists, callout boxes, etc., will you be using?
5. Create an effective 1–2 page issue brief by employing the elements of an issue brief to communicate with your audience on a core issue or program in your problem area.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


